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families in Rangoon have worries of this kind - resolved by arrangements with influence masters - usually undertaken by the wives of the families. Ordinarily, violence is not premeditated but, spur-of-the-moment actions based on passions. If ill-feeling grows gradually it is best handled through the influence masters. The function of this system in the village is to avoid open conflict that might prove disastrous to the solidarity of the community (as say feuding families in open warfare).

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777

789

[621]

[682] ●

BOXING, RACING

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526



388. BULLOCK RACING.

in the ring and slaps his arm (*lenmáung-kat*) to the exclamation of *yáuk-kyá! báthá!*—man that you are and son of a man! (No. 153). When some one steps into the ring to take up the challenge, the pair are conducted by seconds to the judges, who decide if they are fairly matched; they

then stand aside to await their turn. Every kind of attack is fair except pulling hair and biting; a cap is tied on the head to keep the long hair from coming loose. The first trace of blood betokens defeat, but matches are very frequently drawn. This may be the reason why there is no betting. Powerful seconds are on the alert to separate the combatants if they show temper. But the absence of temper, despite the severity of the contest, is its conspicuous feature. The frank dispositions of Burman and Talaing appear to rare advantage. The high spirits of the victor overflow in chivalrous deprecation of his prowess—"the merest fluke in the world!" That among such a people the sense of personal honour is keen goes without saying. Abuse is not so cheap as in India. The *vendetta* is unknown. Fatal quarrels occasionally arise from jealousy; the old national justice put the law into the hand of a betrayed husband.

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Pony-racing is the sport of the North, as boat-racing is that of Pegu with its network of channels. The races are run in heats of twos, like all races in Burma. There are small stakes for the owners, but betting is the soul of the sport. In this the women freely participate. The course is flat, half



389. THE BOAT-RACE GOAL (PAN).

MAUNG HTIN AUNG

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century, the punishment for abduction of women was enhanced from one of confinement in irons to that of death. Thus what the English lawyer would understand by the term "criminal law" was considered to be the personal concern of the king. Therefore, when the ruling king died, and a new king ascended the throne, all persons undergoing punishment for crimes committed under the previous king, automatically were freed. Criminal jurisdiction therefore was considered to be merely an administrative function of the crown, and it concerned the executive, and not the judicial, officers of the state. Modern European writers have ever emphasized the despotism of Burmese kings, but the Royal Edicts proclaimed at the beginning of each reign clearly showed that the Burmese king was not a blood-thirsty individual devoid of all mercy. In the Edicts, we find the king delegating the function of meting out criminal justice to three of his Chief Ministers, admonishing at the same time that they should temper justice with mercy. The king in the Edicts ordered that even in capital crimes, the punishment should be one of banishment, and the sentence of death was to be reserved for vicious criminals. Even when the sentence of death had been passed, the execution was to be postponed for at least ten days so as to enable the king to consider the case and alter the punishment to one of banishment if the facts justified such alteration.

But as in England, the king was considered to be the fountain of justice, for his was the supreme court of the land. The kingdom was divided into provinces, each under a viceroy. Each province was further divided into cities, each city under a governor. Each city or city area was subdivided into towns and each town or town area into villages, with a headman for each town and each village. The courts of the headmen of towns or villages dealt with suits of small value, and there was a right of appeal from those courts to the courts of the governors of cities. The courts of the governors exercised both original and appellate jurisdiction, and appeals from these courts lay to the court of the viceroy, which also exercised both